

# M-ss-ng L-nks



Ages 9-adult

**Turn on mental powers you never knew you had!**

- Amaze yourself (and everyone else) by cracking coded messages with most **or all** of the letters missing.
- Challenge friends and relatives to match their skills against yours.
- Use hidden mental powers that build up your thinking skills, school skills, computer skills.



**SUNBURST**  
EDUCATION

Bright ideas for learning

# C-N Y-- R--D TH-S?

## How good at cracking codes are you?

If you're a "natural," you may already have figured out the message above.

Right, it says:  
CAN YOU READ THIS?

Even if you don't think you're an expert, you'll be amazed at the strange-looking messages you can figure out...

In fact, you may soon be reading sentences that have NO WORDS OR LETTERS AT ALL. Sound impossible? That's what everyone else will say before you show them how it's done.

mi





# ssing links

Truth is, your mind can work miracles once M-SS-NG L-NKS turns on language powers you never knew you had!

You set up each code-cracking puzzle yourself. First, pick the book you want to tackle. (They all come from great kids' stories.) Then, make the puzzle as hard as you like.

Start easy. Leave out only the vowels A,E,I,O,U. Then try harder and harder levels. Soon you'll be dazzling everybody with true mental magic.

Of course, folks who see you in action will want a try. That's only fair. But can they match your skill? That's when the REAL fun starts!

The game grows fiercer and fiercer. "Helpful remarks" fly back and forth.

***Everyone agrees.***

**M-SS-NG L-NKS**

**-S TH- B-ST G-M- -N T-WN!**

# HERE'S HOW M-SS-NG L-NKS WORKS

At the beginning of M-SS-NG L-NKS, a printed message will tell you a little about this program—and then ask if you want to see the instructions.

If you do, you'll get a chance to review some of what you're about to read right now.

If you choose to skip the instructions, you'll be asked to set up your first M-SS-NG L-NKS puzzle on the spot—by making several choices.

You'll choose:

- the number of players in the game (one or two),
- the book,
- one of nine passages from that book, and
- one of nine formats.

FORMAT means a special way of printing the passage. You'll see samples of all nine formats printed like this:

- A. Wh—ch f—rm—t d— y— w—nt?
- B. W—i—h —o—m—t —o —o— w—n—?
- C. W——— f——— d— y— w——?
- D. Which ———— do —— want?
- E. —i— —o— a— o—ou —a—?
- F. ———h ———t —o —u ——t?
- G. Which ———— ——— ——— ———?
- H. ———— ——— ——— ——— ———?
- I. -(No Clues)

(Check pages 7-9 for a closer look at each format.)

Next, you choose the number of tries you get to fill in each missing letter. Give yourself from one to five tries. When you run out of tries, the program will fill in the empty space for you.

If two are playing, you'll also decide how many tries each player gets per turn—from 3 to 15.

Once you've made your choices, the game carries you along.

Look at the beginning of the passage on the screen. In the first empty space, the cursor (a small square or line) appears. On your keyboard, press the letter you think belongs in that empty space.

If you guess the **WRONG** letter, it will appear at the bottom of the screen. Then, try again...until you run out of the tries you've given yourself.

AAAA

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## TWO TYPING TIPS:

1. When pressing a letter key, press lightly and quickly. If you press too hard or long, the letter may repeat itself.

2. When you want to fill in a CAPITAL letter, be sure to press SHIFT when you type that letter in.

- If you have an **Apple**, the program will take care of the capitalizing, so you don't worry about it.

XXX

If you choose the **RIGHT** letter, the cursor will move to the next empty space.

T--  
T-----  
T---

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# Moving the cursor around

You may want to move the cursor inside the passage for various reasons. For instance, you may want to skip hard blank spaces first and come back to them later, or find the easiest ones to fill in first.

Here's how:

## ● If you have an *Apple*:

- Press ← to move the cursor LEFT.
- Press → to move the cursor RIGHT.
- Press Control K (hold the CTRL key and press the K key) to move the cursor UP. If you have the Apple IIe, you may also press the ↑ key.
- Press Control J to move the cursor DOWN. If you have the Apple IIe, you may also press the ↓ key.
- Press Control T (top) to move the cursor to the FIRST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.

## —Press Control B (bottom) to move the cursor to the LAST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.

## ● If you have an *Atari*:

- Press ← to move the cursor LEFT.
- Press → to move the cursor RIGHT.
- Press ↑ to move the cursor UP.
- Press ↓ to move the cursor DOWN.
- Press START to move the cursor to the FIRST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.
- Press SELECT to move the cursor to the LAST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.

## ● If you have an *IBM*:

- Press ← to move the cursor LEFT.
- Press → to move the cursor RIGHT.
- Press ↑ to move the cursor UP.
- Press ↓ to move the cursor DOWN.
- Press HOME to move the cursor to the FIRST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.
- Press END to move the cursor to the LAST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.

## ● If you have a *TRS-80*:

- Press ← to move the cursor LEFT.
- Press → to move the cursor RIGHT.
- Press ↑ to move the cursor UP.
- Press ↓ to move the cursor DOWN.
- Press CLEAR and the ↑ key at the same time to move the cursor to the FIRST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.
- Press CLEAR and the ↓ key at the same time to move the cursor to the LAST BLANK IN THE PASSAGE.

# **How the game is scored**

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To get your score, the program uses a formula which counts:

1. the number of WRONG GUESSES you make in the game;
2. the number of times you GUESS RIGHT ON YOUR FIRST TRY;
3. the number of LETTERS THE PROGRAM FILLS IN for you.

# **How to check your score**

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YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK YOUR SCORE DURING THE GAME. Here's how you do it.

- If you have an **APPLE**, press RETURN.
- If you have an **ATARI**, press OPTION.
- If you have an **IBM**, press ←
- If you have a **TRS-80**, press ENTER.

# How to end the game

IF YOU WANT TO STOP THE GAME AT ANY POINT, here's how:

- If you have an **Apple**, press ESC or Control E (hold the CONTROL key and press the E key). You'll have the choice of stopping altogether, or playing again.
- If you have an **Atari**, press ESC or Control E (hold the Control key and press the E key). You'll have the choice of stopping altogether, or playing again.
- If you have an **IBM**, press ESC or Control E (hold the CONTROL key and press the E key). You'll have the choice of stopping altogether, or playing again.
- If you have a **TRS-80**, press SHIFT, down arrow, and E all at the same time. The game will stop.

## THE NINE FORMATS... A CLOSER LOOK

These nine formats are arranged with the easiest first and the most difficult last.

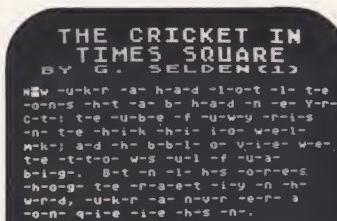
It's suggested that you try format A first, as a way of getting to know the game.

After that, let your code-cracking confidence be your guide!

**FORMAT A**— Leaves out the vowels A,E,I,O,U, and most of the time, Y.



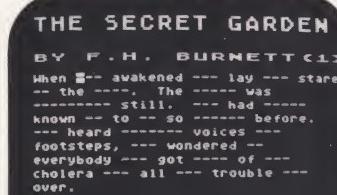
**FORMAT B**— Prints every other letter.



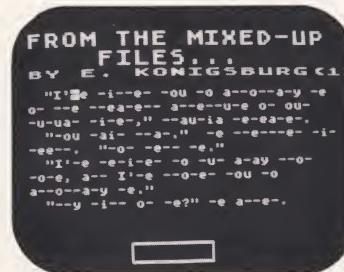
**FORMAT C**— Prints the first letter in each word.



**FORMAT D**— Prints every other word.



**FORMAT E**— Prints only the vowels A,E,I,O,U, and Y.



**FORMAT F**— Prints the last letter of each word.



FORMAT G— Prints the first word of each sentence.



FORMAT H— Prints only blanks that show where the letters belong.



FORMAT I— Prints nothing but the title and author at the top of the screen. (NOT for beginners!)



# A WORD TO ADULTS AND OLDER KIDS...

This program has a special feature that will help you make M-SS-NG L-NKS easier for younger kids to play.

We call it the "Time-Saving Option" and it lets you set up games for youngsters in advance by selecting the kinds of passages, formats, and playing rules they'll enjoy most. Then, when the children sit down to play, they can jump right into it!

## Here's how the "Time-Saving Option" works:

1. Hold the Control (CTRL) key and type the letter "T" when the words "Do you want to see the directions?" appear on the screen. On the TRS-80, hold the Shift Key and the ↓ Key and press the "T" Key.
2. The screen will list the options in the program. Each one will have the words "Student choice" after it. (This means the player can choose the book, passage, number of guesses, etc.)
3. At the bottom of the screen, you'll be asked, "Do you want to make any changes?" If so, type "Yes."
4. The screen will present a numbered list of the options you can change. Respond by typing the number of the one you want to change.
5. The screen will show the passages, formats, rules, etc. you can pick. Select one and type the number next to it.
6. This process will be repeated until you've selected all the options you want to specify. When you have, select "Changes Completed."
7. On the next screen, type "No" to answer the question "Do you want to make any changes?"
8. The program might then say, "Please remove the write protect sticker from the edge of the diskette." (The write protect sticker prevents you from changing information on the diskette). Remove the diskette from the disk drive and peel off the sticker from the edge of the diskette. Then put the diskette into the disk drive again and press the RETURN or ENTER key. This will make your changes a built-in part of the program until you use the "Time-Saving Option" to make new changes. Finally, replace the sticker.

# **OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT... when you play M-SS-NG L-NKS**

- Try making up your own puzzles without a computer**

Write your own. Use the M-SS-NG L-NKS formats. Invent your own formats. If you type, so much the better. If you've got a word processor, better yet. If you like pencil-and-paper games at parties, make copies and pass them out—who can complete your puzzle fastest? Use M-SS-NG L-NKS at a party.

- Play M-SS-NG L-NKS by the clock**

Keep records for how fast you can complete the various formats. Use time as a factor when competing with other players. Set a maximum time limit for each game. Or, award points for best total time. (If you're alternating turns, one person keeps and records the time while the other plays.)

# OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...when you aren't playing M-SS-NG L-NKS

**SHORTHAND** is a lot like some of the M-SS-NG L-NKS formats. Shorthand is a way of writing that leaves out a lot of letters, or replaces letters with simple marks. It's fast and easy to write, but it's also easy to read.

Invent your own short-hand. And use the M-SS-NG L-NKS game to help you. As you play, you'll quickly get a sense of which words come up most often. Those are words you'll want to invent simple marks for—like using a letter "y" for the word "why" and a double crossed "T" for the word "the."

You'll also get a feel for which letters can be dropped from a word—without losing the meaning of the printed word. You'll see which words you pick up from just the first letter, or the last. Try it. You'll find this game helpful in creating a personal short-hand of your own.

**CONVERSATION** is like some of the M-SS-NG L-NKS formats in this way: when we speak we leave out many words, yet their meaning is understood. For example: "Later." left out but understood: "I will see you..." "Back by nine." left out but understood: "I will be..." or "You better be..."

How do we understand the meaning with the words left out? Same way we do it in M-SS-NG L-NKS.

We use what we know about the situation, the speaker, and the words that came before...to fill in what isn't put into words.

Listen for this in conversation. Mentally, or even in a notebook keep track of words which are not said, but are still understood.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE CREDITS**

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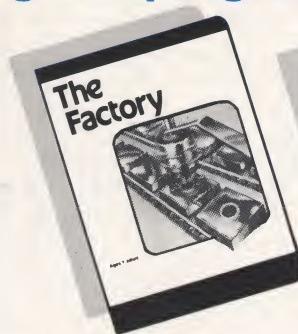
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